Why Do Some Children Read More?

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A new study of more than 11,000 7-year-old twins found that how well children read determines how much they read, not vice versa. Furthermore, the authors of the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry study found that how well children read is highly heritable, while how much they read is influenced equally by genes and the environment.

The findings indicate that children’s reading level fuels how much they choose to read and that children therefore tend to avoid reading if they find it difficult. Interventions should focus not only on promoting reading skills but also motivation to read.

“It was known that how much you do something and how well you do it are related, but for reading this study seems to solve the chicken-and-egg problem,” said lead author Dr. Elsje van Bergen, of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, in The Netherlands.

Additional Information


About Journal

The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry (JCPP) is widely recognised to be the leading international journal covering both child and adolescent psychology and psychiatry. JCPP publishes the highest quality clinically relevant research in psychology, psychiatry and related disciplines. With a large and expanding global readership, its coverage includes studies on epidemiology, diagnosis, psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacological treatments, behaviour, cognition, neuroscience, neurobiology and genetic aspects of childhood disorders. Articles published include experimental, longitudinal and intervention studies, especially those that advance our understanding of developmental psychopathology and that inform both theory and clinical practice. An important function of the Journal is to bring together empirical research, clinical studies and reviews of high quality that arise from different points of view, different theoretical perspectives and different disciplines.

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